



Bulletin: Updates on Maryland’s COVID-19 Vaccine Plan (**Week 27 Update**)
To: All COVID-19 Vaccine Providers Registered in ImmuNet, including but not limited to Hospitals, Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC), and Local Health Departments
From: Bryan Mroz, Assistant Secretary, Maryland Department of Health (MDH)
Date: **June 11, 2021**

- Please review the latest [Vaccination Matters Order \(03/22/2021\)](#). We encourage every provider to make use of every resource to ensure a successful vaccination campaign.
- **All COVID-19 vaccine providers are required to administer COVID-19 vaccine according to the following updated guidance.**
- **This document updates and supersedes the COVID-19 vaccine bulletin (Week 26), dated June 4, 2021 and earlier bulletins. This bulletin will be updated as needed going forward.**

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Updates & Reminders

- **REMINDER: All COVID-19 vaccine providers shall continue to prioritize Marylanders who are 65 and older.**

All local jurisdictions are reminded that homebound seniors should receive priority for vaccines. Jurisdictions should provide up-to-date information on local needs each week in order to receive extra doses for homebound populations using the spreadsheets provided by MDH.

- As access to COVID-19 vaccine increases, it is important for providers not to miss any opportunity to vaccinate every eligible person who presents at vaccine clinics. Please see Section 6 and Appendix 1 for further details.

- **Provider Updates:**

- **As of Friday, June 11, 2021 all providers will be required to place their orders for COVID-19 vaccine through ImmuNet each Friday between 8am and 4pm.**

All providers registered in ImmuNet should have received an email on Monday, June 7 with further details from mdh.covidvax@maryland.gov. Please contact that address if you have any questions.

With this move to direct orders, MDH will no longer provide allocation details in this provider bulletin. Providers can check the status of their COVID-19 order in ImmuNet. Please see [this guide](#) for information on how to check your ImmuNet COVID-19 vaccine order.

- Per the FDA, the shelf life of properly refrigerated (36°F to 46°F) Johnson and Johnson COVID-19 vaccines has been extended from three months to four-and-a-half months. Providers should visit the manufacturer's website to check the expiration dates of any vaccine in their inventory.

1. Vaccine Eligibility

- All Marylanders 12 and older are now eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. All COVID-19 vaccine providers shall continue to prioritize Marylanders who are 65 and older.

Please note: Those aged 12 to 17 are **only eligible to receive the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine** based on the amended Emergency Use Authorization to expand its use in adolescents 12 to 15 years of age. Please see the [FDA](#) and [CDC](#) statements for more information.

MDH strongly supports use of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine in adolescents 12 to 15 years of age, and encourages providers to make appointments available to this population immediately. **Providers should develop their own procedures for handling parental consent of these populations.**

2. Residency and Priority Group Eligibility Determinations

- All COVID-19 vaccine providers shall take reasonable steps to determine if an individual qualifies under the eligible priority groups. A COVID-19 vaccine provider may require additional documentation or employee identification and may require that organizations submit institutional plans with identified individuals. **Any requirements must be applied consistently to all individuals with an appointment.**
- **A COVID-19 vaccine provider may not refuse an individual a vaccine based on their citizenship or immigration status.**
- We prefer that Marylanders are prioritized for getting a vaccine allocated to us by the federal government; however, Maryland will not turn away a person from out of state who needs a vaccine.
- **Non-discrimination:** The Maryland Department of Health complies with applicable Federal and State civil rights laws and prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion or creed, sex, age, ancestry or national origin, marital status, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation and gender identity, genetic information, socioeconomic status, and/or any other protected status. The Maryland Department of Health prohibits the exclusion and favorable/unfavorable treatment of any individual in the aforementioned protected categories based on an individual's medical knowledge of and/or experience with a vaccine's efficacy, longevity, reduced side effects, or any other characteristic associated with the performance of an administered COVID-19 vaccination. **An individual's protected status shall have no bearing on the type of vaccine an individual receives.**

3. Vaccine Operations (Updated June 11, 2021)

- All COVID-19 vaccine providers shall submit their COVID-19 vaccine orders directly through ImmuNet each Friday between 8am and 4pm. Please review this [document](#) for instructions on how to place a COVID-19 vaccine order in ImmuNet.

- All COVID-19 Vaccine Providers shall: Register in ImmuNet to order vaccine at: https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/OIDEOR/IMMUN/Pages/quick_ref_guides.aspx

NOTE: Registration does not guarantee the immediate allocation of the vaccine. Allocation is dependent on vaccine supply.

- **Pfizer:** Per updated [federal guidance](#), all vials of Pfizer contain 6 vaccine doses. Providers that are unable to get a sixth dose from each vial will need to report the sixth dose as wastage using the process outlined in Section 4, Wastage. Additional Pfizer details can be found here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/info-by-product/pfizer/index.html>

- **Moderna:** Per updated federal guidance, Moderna will only ship vials containing the larger 15 vaccine doses (but are indicated as 14 dose vials). Providers should note the vial size of the vials they have in their inventory before administering doses. Requests will be filled in installments of 140. Additional Moderna details can be found here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/info-by-product/moderna/index.html>

- **Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 Vaccine:**

i. All vaccine providers who receive J&J vaccine **shall**:

1. Comply with the FDA emergency use authorization conditions and recommendations;
2. Develop internal use and administration guidelines for offering the J&J vaccine in conjunction with any other allocated vaccine as clinically appropriate and based on the availability of vaccine.

ii. All hospital providers who receive J&J vaccine **shall**, subject to the availability of vaccine supply:

1. Offer the J&J vaccine to any eligible inpatients being discharged from a hospital admission to a nursing home, assisted living program, or other post-acute care facility (such as a rehabilitation center).

Please note: If J&J is offered and refused upon discharge, hospitals should make an effort to make Pfizer or Moderna available to the inpatient.

2. Offer the J&J vaccine to eligible inpatient rehabilitation patients who have longer lengths of stay, but not 3-4 weeks needed for the Pfizer/Moderna second dose to be given before discharge.

iii. Further clinical guidance can be found here:

<https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/janssen-covid-19-vaccine>

iv. J&J orders will arrive in the State no earlier than Wednesday.

4. [CovidVax.Maryland.gov](https://www.covidvax.maryland.gov)

- “All providers **who administer vaccines to the general public** shall submit their vaccination site details (vaccine appointment registration webpage and a phone number that directs callers to staff accepting appointment registrations) to john.watson@maryland.gov.”
- All registered COVID-19 vaccine providers in ImmuNet that are offering vaccination clinics will be listed on this page.

5. **Second Doses**

- As vaccine first doses are administered, providers should be able to estimate the number of patients that will require a second dose each week.
- Patients requiring second doses should be prioritized. Providers should manage appointments for second doses based on weekly estimates.
- To the extent possible, a provider shall schedule an individual's second dose at the time of the first dose at the appropriate time interval from the 1st dose. An individual does not need to create a new appointment on their own for the 2nd dose. This dose should be at the same location with the same provider. For more information, please see the [CDC second dose information](#).
- As of May 21, 2021, all COVID-19 providers may use first and second dose allocations interchangeably. Providers are required to ensure that second dose appointments are scheduled and doses allocated to those appointments before new first dose appointments are scheduled. Any miscalculations of first and second dose allocations are the provider's responsibility; the state may not be able to assist with additional doses to make up for dose shortfalls.

6. Wastage/At-risk Vaccines

- To avoid missed vaccine administration opportunities, vaccine providers may follow the CDC updated wastage policy, found below in Appendix 1, with the understanding that the emphasis on reducing vaccine wastage by providers remains. Please continue to follow best practices to use every dose possible while minimizing the expense of missing an opportunity to vaccinate every eligible person when they are ready to get vaccinated.
 - For further guidance, please refer to the current [Vaccination Matters Order](#) and/or [Provider Guidance for Avoiding Waste of COVID-19 Vaccine Doses](#) documents (subject to update).
- Providers should report all COVID-19 vaccine wastage and vaccine storage unit temperature excursions to:
<https://www.marylandvfc.org/covid-19-vaccine-excursion-expiration-reporting-form/>.

NOTE: For providers that have received Pfizer: If a provider is unable to access a sixth dose, the sixth dose must be reported as wastage as “other”.

Please review the guidelines before disposing of any COVID-19 vaccine doses.

7. Transfer of Doses from the Original Provider

- A provider who has been allocated doses from Maryland may transfer doses to another vaccine provider. The receiving vaccine provider must have completed the CDC provider agreement and the CDC redistribution agreement.
- Providers **must** keep records of what doses have been transferred and **must** complete a transfer request here at:
<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/52e75f3d4514499cb0fd7110bd4000a7>
 - The form will ask to/from, date, type (1st or 2nd) and amount.
- Both the transferring provider and the receiving provider are responsible for ensuring that their part of the transfer is executed correctly, i.e. transfer paperwork, chain of custody, storage and handling.
- Receiving providers must have the proper reporting mechanism in place and are responsible for reporting the vaccinations to ImmuNet.

Further information will be provided as it becomes available. If you have any questions, please contact mdh.covidvax@maryland.gov.

Appendix 1: CDC Statement on Wastage (as of May 11, 2021)

Take every opportunity to vaccinate every eligible person

- Over a hundred million people are fully vaccinated in the United States, and many more have received at least one COVID-19 vaccination.
- Our goal is to increase vaccine confidence and for everyone who wants to be vaccinated to have every opportunity to be fully vaccinated once they become eligible.
- CDC and our partners are doing everything possible to minimize the amount of vaccine that goes unused.
- Vaccine wastage may increase as the vaccine rollout continues because:
 - more providers, including smaller provider sites, are now receiving vaccine,
 - vial sizes for some vaccines have increased,
 - vaccine vials may be opened without every dose being used
- To ensure providers do not miss an opportunity to vaccinate every eligible person, CDC recommends:
 - Providers follow [clinical best practice for vaccination as well as best practices when managing inventory](#) to maximize vaccination and minimize dose wastage.
 - Providers should not miss any opportunities to vaccinate every eligible person who presents at a vaccination site, even if it means puncturing a multidose vial to administer vaccine without having enough people available to receive each dose.
 - Consider establishing and promoting standing vaccination days or half-days to increase likelihood of larger numbers of people presenting for vaccination on the same day.
 - Vaccinate family members or friends who accompany patients to medical visits even if they are not established patients at the vaccinating practice
 - Continue outreach to employers or other community partners that have a large membership or network to arrange vaccination events.
 - As a contingency plan, vaccine providers should attempt to contact additional persons (i.e., from a waitlist or through personal contacts of persons being vaccinated) to use as many vaccine doses as possible.
 - Once punctured, multidose vials must be used within:
 - 12 hours (Moderna)
 - 6 hours (Pfizer)
 - 2 hours (J&J/Janssen)
 - The more Americans who get vaccinated the fewer COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, outbreaks, and deaths that will occur.
- CDC remains committed to helping jurisdictions and sites manage inventory and creating additional strategies to minimize vaccine wastage, including increased use of walk-in clinics.